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I may add that the compulsory idea embodied in my bill, came up in the Massachusetts Legislature a short time ago, and, after a full debate, it received 43 votes to 48 against it, lacking only 5 votes of passage. If you should use your influence to have the bill introduced into the New York Assembly I am sure it would at once become a law in your State. The principle is sound.

HARRIS J. CLINTON.

I subjoin the bill that I prepared embodying the principle of compulsory voting :

SECTION I. Be it enacted, by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland, that it shall be compulsory upon every qualified voter, of the State of Maryland, to cast a ballot at each and every general election, hereafter held in Baltimore or any of the several Counties of this State, according to law.

SECTION II. And, be it enacted, that it shall be the duty of the Judges of Election, at each and every general election hereafter held in this State, according to law, at the closing of the polls of said election, to examine the book containing the names of the said qualified voters, of their respective polling places, and to make a red mark under the name of each voter who has neglected to cast his ballot at said election ; and to have copied a true and correct list of names and addresses of all voters who failed to cast their ballots, as aforesaid ; such copy to be signed by each Judge and attested by the clerks, at each polling place, and to be transmitted by the returning Judge, within the next succeeding ten days of said election, to the Clerk of the Criminal Court of Baltimore City, or Clerk of the Circuit Court of the County in which said election was held.

SECTION III. And, be it enacted, that it shall be the duty of the Clerks of said Courts, to immediately issue summons under the seal of the Court, to be served by the Sheriff upon said delinquent voter, commanding him to appear in person before the Court at its next sitting thereafter, to show cause why the fine, hereinafter prescribed, shall not be imposed upon him for neglecting to cast his ballot at said election.

SECTION IV. And, be it enacted, that it shall be the duty of the presiding Judge of said Court to hear the cause or excuse of said voter for his failure to cast his ballot at said election, and if he be unable to give such an excuse under oath as prescribed by Section 5 of this Act, then said Judge shall give judgment against said voter for the fine of \$5 (five dollars) and costs, to be collected as other fines and forfeitures are collected in this State.

SECTION V. And, be it enacted, that every voter who violates Section 1 (one) of this Act shall be subject to the fine herein imposed, unless he can show to the satisfaction of the Judge before whom his case is heard, that he was unable, by reason of sickness, or absence from the City or County, wherein he is a qualified voter, at the time of the holding of said election, to cast his ballot at said election.

SECTION VI. And, be it enacted, that if any qualified voter be adjudged guilty of violating Section 1 of this Act, his property, to the amount of one hundred dollars, shall be exempt from liability for said fine and judgment.

SECTION VII. And, be it enacted, that all fines collected under or by virtue of this Act, shall go to the Public School Fund of Baltimore City, or of the County wherein said fine is imposed and collected.

SECTION VIII. And, be it further enacted, that this act shall take effect from the date of its passage.

III.

PRESIDENTIAL HAND-SHAKING.

To the unreflecting observer the rite of hand-shaking, as officially countenanced in the greatest of republics, may seem a light and trifling matter, but to one who has the public interest really at heart it is fraught with large importance. There are a great many persons still living who remember a tall, gaunt figure, with mighty reach of arm and a hand that was big enough and strong enough to shake a kingdom—a figure that for near five years stood in the White House and survived an ordeal such as has fallen to the lot of very few men in all times. On oc-

casions of "state and ceremony" he would receive one visitor after another with the mechanical hand-shake required of him, but to his intimates he confessed that his mind was frequently far away—with Sherman, perhaps, on his March to the Sea, with Grant in the Virginian Wilderness, or with Thomas in Tennessee. To the sensitive spectator who may have joined one of the groups near by the spectacle of this patient giant permitting hundreds to grasp his hand for an instant was pitiful in the extreme, and more than one has been tempted to remonstrate. But the public has established the custom and demands its perpetuation, and just now a young and attractive woman, is called upon to bear her share of the burden.

The present chief executive of the United States is probably better able to endure the physical strain of excessive hand-shaking than are most of his contemporaries. At all events, he has, up to this writing, given no signs of exhaustion, but the drain upon his vital powers must be enormous—no milder term is adequate—and the problem of abolishing, or in some way modifying, what is already a grave abuse, must, sooner or later, be considered. Men who hold a position involving such responsibilities as those of the President should not be permitted, much less required, to weary themselves unnecessarily. It is not beyond the range of possibility that under such a process of slow worriment—the worst kind of torture—some mental process might be induced that should inure to the public injury. This is merely thrown out as a hint, but suppose the President should go into the East Room determined to veto, let us say, a River and Harbor Bill, is it not easily within the range of possibility that his noble resolve might literally be shaken out of him before the ceremonies were over?

CHARLES LEDYARD NORTON.

IV.

NATIONAL PLAGUE-SPOTS.

As civilization grows older the problems of life grow more perplexing, the why and wherefore of human existence become more involved in doubt, and the conflict between good and evil seems to be growing yearly more in favor of the devil. Just as there are diseases which are rife among the rich, and seldom found among the poor, so in our national life there are ills which germinate in the cities, and from which the rural populations are comparatively free.

Man ages more rapidly in the town than in the country. The wear and tear of city life exhaust human vitality. Men live faster and spend themselves more freely in the city, and so the towns of the nation become centres from which radiate the arteries of trade and intelligence, bearing the products of human intellects and human hands into far-away homes, and promoting the free comparison and interchange of ideas, customs, and habits. Evil and good come and go with the human life that pulsates through these arteries of national existence, and the great cities, which are the ganglionic centres of the nation, spread the vices, which thrive so luxuriantly in their boundaries, until their evil influences are felt in Maine and California and Texas.

Great cities are, therefore, the plague-spots of the nation. They will cease to be plague-spots only when the virtue within them exceeds the vice. New York is the metropolis of crime, as she is the metropolis of trade, and nearly all the diseases to which the body politic is subject are found in her—some visible to everyone, others hidden in special localities, not to be seen unless carefully looked for. All have so vast a potentiality for evil that the whole nation is interested in the experimental efforts to purge and purify her. The reform of the electoral system,